

## Sunday School

### AENEAS AND DORCAS.

Acts 9: 31-43.

March 14, 1909.

**GOLDEN TEXT.**—"And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately."—Acts 9: 34.

### SHORTER CATECHISM.

Q. 46. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

### DAILY HOME READINGS.

M.—Acts 9: 31-43. T.—Deut. 15: 7-11.  
W.—Job 29: 1-13. Th.—1 Tim. 6: 9-19.  
F.—Matt. 25: 31-40. S.—Gal. 6: 1-10.  
S.—2 Cor. 8: 1-9.

### TOPICAL OUTLINE.

#### The Lame Walk and the Dead Raised Up—

Peter at Lydda, Aeneas healed, vs. 31-35.

Peter at Joppa, Dorcas brought to life, vs. 36-43.

#### The Localities.

Forty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem is the seaport of Joppa, the modern Jaffa. On the road between these places, nine miles from Joppa is Lydda. About forty miles north of Joppa on the seacoast is Cesarea. The name Sharon belongs to the whole of the fertile plain which includes these places. Lydda was a large village or town. It now contains about two thousand inhabitants; it is remarkable for the splendid church built there by Richard Coeur de Lion, (an early king of England), in honor of St. George, who was born and died at Lydda. The ruins of the church still bear testimony to its former grandeur.

Joppa is a crowded city of perhaps 15,000 inhabitants, the seaport of Jerusalem. It was at Joppa that the cedar for both the old temple and the new, was landed, to be carried up to Mount Moriah.

#### The Cure of Eneas.

Eneas was a paralytic. Paralysis is generally caused by a clot of blood pressing on the brain, or on the spinal marrow. An ordinary recovery from paralysis is very slow, depending upon the absorption into the veins, (little by little) of the clot which has caused the mischief. The case of Eneas was one which presented no probability of a cure; for when paralysis does not begin to yield to treatment within a few weeks, it is considered almost incurable. Eneas had been on the bed eight years. But by Peter he was instantaneously cured, and in the same instant his strength was restored to such an extent that he could "spread up" his bed.

The effect of the miracle was two-fold. On the one hand, the miracle was directly and immediately by the power of Jesus. We do not know that Peter even touched the sufferer. He said to him simply this: "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed." Its effect was to convince the doubting ones that Jesus is Christ. On the other hand, all men would know that the miracle was through the instrumentality of Peter, and the effect would be to give him a new recognition as the apostle of Christ, and a wonderful de-

gree of influence in that part of Palestine. This reputation would serve to encourage Cornelius when told to send for Peter, and would make the common people recognize more clearly his Divine authority in the innovation of preaching to the Gentiles, and partaking of the Lord's Supper with them.

#### Dorcas.

Our attention is withdrawn awhile to consider Dorcas. A noble woman she was; and a noble reward has God given her. "The righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance," is God's promise, and it finds a beautiful illustration in her case. Her name, (both Dorcas in Greek and Tabitha in Aramaic) means Gazelle. Her life was full of good works and almsdeeds. Especially was she kind toward widows. She had furnished them with coats, or close fitting tunics extending from the neck to the knees or ankles. And she had distributed among them many "garments," loose flowing robes of purple or brown, (for such colors only were worn by widows) to wear outside. Verse 39, implies that she had made these garments herself. And her death was full of honor. Not hired mourners, after the Jewish custom, were around her, but genuine friends, sorrowing over her death, and telling of the kindnesses received from her.

The sorrowing ones send for Peter. He was only nine miles off. With what design, we know not; probably with a hope that he would in some way relieve their sorrow. He comes. There is no doubt of her death, for those who prepared her for burial are sure of that fact. He puts them all out, that he may pray uninterruptedly to the Father. Then he calls her back to life. Imagine the joy of her friends when she comes down stairs, strong and well, and resumes her former duties of waiting on them.

#### The Miracle.

A great miracle, the greatest possible miracle, had been wrought. None could doubt it. Many of the people thereupon became disciples of Jesus. They needed the presence of Peter to instruct them in Christian doctrine. Others were impressed, almost ready to believe; they needed the preaching of Peter to bring them to true faith. Therefore, Peter abode many days in Joppa with one Simon, a tanner.

As in the former case, this miracle secured for Peter new authority and influence among the people, and thus again were they prepared to feel, when they heard of his breaking through the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile, that he did it by authority, and that he was right.

#### Practical Lessons.

1. When Peter bade Eneas rise, he arose, and found that God had given him strength. So when Christ bids thee repent, do so; and thou shalt find Christ's strength sufficient for the duty.

2. Christ's power could both heal the sick one, and raise the dead. So the same power doth both heal those who are spiritually sick, and raise those who are spiritually dead. Trust him.

3. The praise accorded to Dorcas is not on account of great works, but on account of ordinary deeds of kindness, such as you and I can do every day. Let us be sure to do them.

4. The occupation of a tanner was in bad repute among the Jews. If a man took to that business after marriage his wife might claim a divorce on that ground. Yet Peter accepts his hospitality in order to further the gospel. So also must every Christian worker consent to that which is not according to his taste, in order to prosecute Christ's work vigorously.